

Workshop Overheads

The average overhead costs increased by 6.98% from 51.28 in 1956/57 to 58.26 in 1957/58.

3. GENERAL

The facilities of the Branch Workshops included machine and fitting shops, blacksmithing, plumbing and sheet metal working, electrical fitting and armature winding, painting, carpentry, bricklaying and automotive servicing and repairs.

In an endeavour to reduce the number of manhours lost in locating hand tools from the shadow board in the general engineering workshop and at the same time to provide a greater measure of security for the equipment, the shadow board was demolished and by arrangement, tools were transferred to the custody of the Branch store and issued through a hatchway in the North Workshop wall to personnel by chit only.

"Housekeeping" was improved upon by the provision of a small equipment room for the storage of equipment which is not in every day use.

A small office was provided for the Building Maintenance Foreman adjacent to the Carpentry Shop.

Some additional lighting was supplied in the Carpentry, Paint and General Engineering Workshops.

The North wall, internal, of the General engineering workshops received a coat of paint.

During the year E.S.D. equipment machines, hand tools and workshop accommodation was supplied at no charge to the Production Department.

In view of the constant necessity to maintain production and reduce costs, the general position regarding Workshops in the Ballarat area has been given some thought.

At the present time two engineering workshops function in the area, one controlled by E.S.D. at Wendouree Parade, the other controlled by P.P.D. at Creswick Road.

Considerable economics could be gained by the Commission, if the existing Workshops were amalgamated to form one central Workshop located at Howitt or Norman Streets, to cater for all engineering, building and transport maintenance work in the area.

By the full utilisation of all essential machine tools, the number of machines and equipment could be reduced by 50% approximately.

Regarding labour, under a central control operating on a straight priority basis, overall costs would be reduced. Costs to the individual sections would also be reduced as the need would not arise to carry a sufficient labour force full time, in order to cope with certain seasonal peaks, such as annual overhauls. If and when additional labour were required, it would be readily obtainable from the central workshop.

Such a scheme could not, it is realized, be implemented overnight. Opposition from certain quarters would undoubtedly arise. The old grumble would be heard about "being unable to get the work done when required", but the fact remains that the principle is sound in practice and is not without precedent. In Yallourn, the central Workshop cater expeditiously for the requirements of all sections.

It could well be emulated, on a smaller scale of course, in Ballarat.

Several jobs, some of which are worthy of mention were undertaken on behalf of other Departments by the Works Section.

On the 17th of February, 1958, an urgent request was received from Civil Design and Construction to undertake the demolition of certain foundations in the Ballarat "B" switchyard, and to construct new foundations and cable trenches to accommodate O.C.B.'s and switchgear for the new 66kV. line to Morsham. As the date to energise the line had been announced prior to the request being received, speedy construction was essential. Men were transferred from normal maintenance and materials urgently procured. Overtime was unavoidable, but the 14 cub. yds. of concrete foundations, together with the required trenches were completed in time to allow for the erection of switchgear by personnel of the E.P.E.'s section and it is understood the line was energised as scheduled.

Men, materials and equipment were made available to Civil Design and Construction, for construction of concrete aprons round Cooling Towers Nos. 1 and 2 at "B" Station. Due to the combined effects of inclement weather and the load demand on the station the work was suspended. It is proposed to continue construction during the summer period 1958/59.

A detailed estimated cost was furnished at the request of the Engineer for Design, Regional Power Stations, for the proposed rebuilding at "A" Station of Cooling Tower No. 1, maintenance on No. 3 and extensive maintenance on No. 4 (No. 2 was demolished in June, 1958 and No. 3 was rebuilt by Workshops May/June, 1957).

An estimated cost was submitted to the Production Department for the manufacture of 25 hinged insulation covers for main steam line flanges. In competition not only with local, but also Melbourne engineering concerns the Workshops tendered figure was accepted and the work carried out for the contracted price.

Equipment

The following capital equipment was provided for the Workshops:-

1. Band saw THORNLEY (Ex Richmond)
2. 250 ft. of scaffolding (clips ex Yallourn)
3. Sewerage clearing rods
4. Burring machine HEINE
5. Pavement breaker - Broomwall

The stringent financial position excluded procurement of a radial drill. All drilling work over 1/2" diameter of necessity was performed on a Rockford (1909) pedestal drill. In practice, when a number of holes require to be drilled, the job must be repositioned after every operation. The man hours lost caused concern.

4. TRANSPORT MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

Personnel - Resignations and transfers of personnel from the Workshop, for the first time in many years was nil.

The temporary absence of the Transport Maintenance Foreman on long service leave was covered by promoting the Leading Hand Mechanic to Acting Foreman, and transferring a fitter from the General Workshop. The arrangement proved highly satisfactory.

GENERAL

The Transport Engineer visited the Workshop on the 27th November, 1957, and resulting from his inspection of equipment, a second hand TRCALEMIT 'Goliath' portable greasing unit was made available to facilitate servicing of vehicles.

Additional equipment procured during the year was a set of hydraulic tyre removers, consisting of one unit for heavy vehicles and one unit for sedans and utilities. The result of the above acquisitions was a direct saving in man hours on tyre replacement work, together with a finished job of higher standard.

Working conditions generally in the section remained as in the past extremely poor 75% of all maintenance and servicing work was carried out in the semi enclosed garage.

The Organiser of the Amalgamated Engineering Union visited the Workshop on the 3rd of June, 1958, in the course of investigating a complaint from Union members. The complaint concerned working conditions during inclement weather.

The Architectural Branch prepared a drawing which proposed to extend the roof of the open section of the garage by 17 ft. to erect a new West wall fitted with three fast operating roller shutter doors, and to fit a similar type of door in the East wall. Also it was proposed to heat the enclosed area by means of space heaters.

The plan was accepted by the Branch and the estimated cost of the extension submitted. It is anticipated construction will be undertaken by Workshops personnel as soon as possible.

Trailers, the maintenance of which for Distribution operational reasons, in the past, was irregular were organised into the general scheme of vehicle preventive maintenance. A three monthly service was implemented.

Fuel Sales tractors, also because of operational requirements, were serviced (Class I) by operating personnel. All services are now performed by Transport Maintenance Personnel.

Mr. R. Wheat, Transport Branch, conducted a series of lectures on 5th/7th April, 1958, entitled "Safe Driving and Vehicle leave". All Commission drivers in the area attended. It is difficult to access the results of the lectures but they cannot be otherwise than beneficial.

During September, 1957, the Branch Manager expressed his concern at the rising incidence of motor vehicle accidents, and directed that each accident be thoroughly investigated to ascertain -

- (a) the cause of the accident
- (b) what action could be taken

to prevent the possibilities of a repetition.

Immediately the directive was implemented a steady reduction in the number of accidents per month occurred. By the end of the year the number of accidents per month had dropped to 5 (or 50% reduction) and future prospects are that this figure will be further reduced. A factor which greatly assisted in reducing the number of accidents which occurred in the Wendouree Works Area, and which was a direct outcome of the investigations, was the allocation of parking places for specific vehicles, the utilisation, as an addition parking area, of the site of No. 2 Cooling Tower and the application of white paint to all projections, such as columns, corners and crossovers, within the Area.

5. FIRE CONTROL

Officers from the local Country Fire Authority carried out the annual inspection of equipment, tested hoses and refilled extinguishers on the 24th January, 1958. They also instructed personnel at Wendouree Parade, Works Area, City Office, Tram and Briquette Depots in the use of the equipment.

A "visual" inspection was made by Mr. Scott of the City Brigade and the Works Superintendent on 17th June, 1958.

Mr. Baker, the Commission's Fire Control Officer made an unannounced inspection of Branch equipment on the 13th September, 1957. A washer, which was found missing from the hose coupling on the Administration Office stairway was renewed.

The portable fire pump was tested at three monthly intervals.

6. SAFETY

An intensive campaign to reduce the number of lost time accidents in the Branch was commenced during the reported period.

Branch monthly figures for accident and frequency rates steadily improved.

Two schemes were introduced to publicise time lost, due to accidents.

(a) Branch Personnel were divided as evenly as possible into four teams. Monthly score boards were erected to show the man hours lost by each team and the relative value of the hour lost.

(b) "Safe Working" boards were erected, which show the number of days since the last lost time accident occurred in each section of the Branch. This scheme covers the entire Electricity Supply Department and at the 30th of June, 1958, it is interesting to note that only ten sections have over 1,000 days to their credit and 3 of these are Ballarat sections namely Transport Maintenance with 2,653 days, Store with 1,695 days and Tramways Tracks with 1,031 days.